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Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05
SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 SY-05
OPR-02 AID-05 SCS-06 MCT-01 PC-05 OC-06 /136 R

DRAFTED BY AF/P BRUSSELL:PCM
APPROVED BY AF/P RHOLLIDAY
----------083888 230506Z /10
O 222358Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USICA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILE
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY BANJUL
AMCONSUL BUKAVU
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
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USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY COTONOU

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AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY PRAIA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING MAY 22, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q: CAN YOU BRING US UP TO DATE ON ZAIRE? PARTICULARLY, DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMED KNOWLEDGE OF ANY AMERICAN FATALITIES?

A: I DO NOT. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO CONFIRM FOR YOU ANY AMERICAN FATALITIES. WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THAT. LET ME READ THROUGH HERE OF WHAT I DO HAVE:
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AS TO NUMBER OF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ZAIRE, AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL, WE HAVE HAD MILITARY PERSONNEL IN, ON THE INVITATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE, IN A NUMBER SUFFICIENT TO CARRY OUT THE SUPPORT EFFORT WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS OPERATION AND WHICH HAS BEEN DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. THAT NUMBER HAS NEVER EXCEEDED 100. NONE ARE IN, NOR HAVE BEEN IN, THE COMBAT AREA. ALL WERE GROUND SUPPORT, DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE DELIVERY OF THE OF THE ITEMS WE TRANSPORTED FOR THE FRENCH AND THE BELGIANS, AND WE EXPECT THAT THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WILL NOT BE INCREASED AND WE DO NOT EXPECT THEM TO BE IN HOSTILE AREAS.

AS TO OUR MILITARY MISSION IN KINSHASA WE ORIGINALLY HAD 6 PEOPLE IN OUR ZAIRIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE GROUP. WE ADDED ONE TO HELP ABSORB THE ADDITIONAL WORK WHICH WAS PRODUCED BY THE ACCELERATED DELIVERY OF SOME OF THE ALREADY-APPROVED FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE ITEMS WHICH WERE SLATED FOR THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT.

AS TO THE AMERICAN CITIZENS IN THE AREA, WE HAVE IN THE

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PAST GIVEN THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS IN KOLWEZI AS 14. A SHORT TIME AGO WE LEARNED THAT THERE WAS A 15TH, WHO WAS A DEPENDENT OF A U.S. RESIDENT. OF THIS TOTAL OF 15, 13 HAVE BEEN NOW ACCOUNTED FOR; 2 UNFORTUNATELY ARE NOT ACCOUNTED FOR AND WE ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THEM.

WE HAVE SENT A CONSULAR OFFICER FROM LUMBUMBASHI. WE DID THAT AS SOON AS IT WAS POSSIBLE AND THE PURPOSE OF THAT SENDING OF THAT CONSULAR OFFICER WAS TO TRY TO LOCATE AMERICANS IN KOLWEZI AND TO SEE THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVACUATION.

Q: ON THAT POINT, IS THERE ANY REASON FOR SUSPICION THAT THE TWO AMERICANS MIGHT BE WITH THOSE REPORTED TAKEN OFF
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BY THE KATANGESE?

A: I JUST DON'T THINK WE HAVE ANY INFORMATION AS TO THEIR WHEREABOUTS OR AS TO THEIR SAFETY AT THE MOMENT. I WILL TRY TO GET YOU MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON THOSE TWO.

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHO THEY ARE?

A: I CANNOT, I AM SORRY. I WILL TRY TO GET YOU THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE UNACCOUNTED FOR.

Q: DO YOU KNOW IF THEY STAYED BY CHOICE OR IS THAT ALSO NOT KNOWN?

A: I DO NOT KNOW.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE ON THE GROUND IN ZAIRE?

A: NO, I REALLY DON'T HAVE A SITUATION REPORT ON THE GROUND THERE IN KOLWEZI.

Q: HAVE THE KATANGESE WITHDRAWN, AND IS THE FIGHTING NOW DIMINISHING?

A: I THINK I SAW SOMETHING THAT INDICATED THAT THE FIGHTING HAS DIMINISHED, BUT I REALLY DON'T HAVE A SITUATION REPORT ON IT.

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT POSITION IS ON THE REVIEW OF THE SUPPOSEDLY RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATION -- ESPECIALLY NOW THAT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N., ANDY YOUNG, HAS DECLARED THAT THERE IS
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NOTHING IN THE CURRENT LEGISLATION WHICH TIES THE PRESI-
DENT'S HANDS, IN HIS JUDGMENT?

A: WELL, THAT REVIEW IS STILL UNDER WAY. ITS PURPOSES
ARE AS I HAVE DESCRIBED THEM FOR YOU LAST WEEK. THERE
ARE ANY NUMBER OF STATUTES WHICH ARE UNDER REVIEW, OR
WHICH HAVE BEEN PASSED BY THE CONGRESS OVER THE YEARS,
AND WE ARE TRYING TO IDENTIFY THOSE VARIOUS STATUTES AND
TO SIT DOWN WITH THE CONGRESS TO SEE WHAT MAKES SENSE
AND WHAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

NOW LET ME SAY WITH REGARD TO WHAT THE AMBASSADOR SAID
YESTERDAY: IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT HIS OFFICE IN
NEW YORK WILL BE ISSUING A BRIEF STATEMENT WHICH WILL
CLARIFY THAT THE AMBASSADOR DOES SUPPORT THIS REVIEW.

Q: WOULD THE ADMINISTRATION LIKE TO HAVE THE CAPACITY FOR
COVERT OPERATIONS? AND IS THAT WHY THE CLARK AMENDMENT
IS ONE OF THOSE SPECIFICALLY LISTED?

A: NO, WE HAVE REACHED NO DECISION ON A RECOMMENDATION
ABOUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE CLARK AMENDMENT.

LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT THAT IS ONLY ONE OF A GREAT NUMBER
OF STATUES WHICH ARE UNDER REVIEW; BUT WE HAVE REACHED
NO DECISION ABOUT WHAT TO RECOMMEND TO THE CONGRESS,
AND WE WILL BE TALKING WITH THE CONGRESS ABOUT THIS.

Q: CAN YOU GIVE US ANY MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXACT

ROLE THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS CLAIM IN TRAINING THE
KATANGANS? SPECIFICALLY, HOW RECENT THEIR TRAINING
WAS. CAN YOU CLARIFY THAT?

A: I REALLY AM NOT IN A POSITION TO CLARIFY THAT. I
THINK IT WAS DEALT WITH HERE ON FRIDAY AND I AM NOT IN
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A POSITION TO ADD ANYTHING FURTHER.

Q. CAN YOU COMMENT ON A REPORT THAT ACTUALLY EAST
GERMANS WERE THE ONES WHO WERE TRAINING THE KATANGESE
TO DISRUPT ACTIVITY IN THE SHABA PROVINCE? DOES THE
U.S. HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT?

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A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU.

Q. WERE WE RESTRAINED IN ANY WAY BY CONGRESSIONAL LIMITATIONS IN THIS OPERATION?

A. NO. I DON'T THINK THERE REALLY IS A FEELING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE RESTRAINTS WHICH ARE WRITTEN INTO THE LAW BY THE CONGRESS SERIOUSLY HAMPERED WHAT WE WANTED TO BE ABLE TO DO IN ZAIRE.

Q. IF YOU LOOK AT THE LIST, PARTICULARLY THOSE ITEMS DEALING WITH MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THERE IS ONLY ONE ITEM WHICH DOESN'T GIVE THE PRESIDENT A WAIVER, THAT IS THE BAN ON COVERT ACTIVITY IN ANGOLA. ALL THE OTHERS -- I MAY HAVE SKIPPED ONE -- PRETTY MUCH ALLOW THE PRESIDENT IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO WAIVE IT. SO THEREFORE THE QUESTION ARISES, IS THIS A CHARADE JUST TO GET TO THE ANGOLA ISSUE, WHICH IS THE ONLY ONE OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAS OUTRIGHTLY BEEN BARRED FROM DOING ANYTHING. THE REST OF THEM HE HAS FLEXIBILITY ON.

A. I AM SORRY, I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN THE POSITION OF MAKING A JUDGMENT FROM THIS PODIUM BEFORE A JUDGMENT HAS IN FACT BEEN MADE BY THE ADMINISTRATION. THIS IS NOT A CHARADE. WE ARE LOOKING AT ALL THE STATUTES
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WHICH ARE ON THAT LIST, AND WE HAVE MADE NO SPECIFIC JUDGMENTS ABOUT WHAT TO RECOMMEND, IF ANYTHING, ABOUT ANY PARTICULAR STATUTE ON THE LIST.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER ON THE CUBAN THING? THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OVER THE WEEKEND THAT CUBANS WERE ACTUALLY IN THE FIGHTING.

A. NO, WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION THAT THERE ARE ANY CUBAN NATIONALS INSIDE ZAIRE, NOR EVER BEEN.

Q. LET'S GO BACK TO THAT REVIEW. WAS THIS REVIEW ORDERED BY PRESIDENT CARTER?

A. THAT IS MY UNDERSTANDING, YES. VANCE

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